

THE DIRECTOR OF
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE


National Intelligence Council

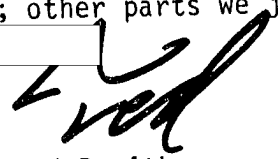
1 November 1983

NOTE FOR: Herb Meyer
VC/NIC

FROM : MG Atkeson
NIO/GPF

SUBJECT : SPETSNAZ Article

Attached is the article I mentioned to you
by the Soviet defector who writes under the
pseudonym "Suvorov." Much of it is on the
money; some is incorrect; other parts we just
don't know much about. 


Edward B. Atkeson

Attachment

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CONFIDENTIAL

Spetsnaz the Soviet Union's special forces

by Viktor Suvorov

is believed to be the most detailed article ever published on the Soviet special forces, Spetsnaz. The author, a professional Soviet army officer, who has defected to the west and who writes under a pseudonym, claims to have had some experience with them during military career.

There have been several brief references in print to the reydoviki (raiders), as the Spetsnaz units based in Eastern Europe are known. In the west, the reydoviki are frequently referred to as "diversionary" troops, since one of their primary tasks is to create confusion and panic deep behind NATO lines, by means of sabotage and the attack of key mobile headquarters, etc. They have the further task of providing detailed information on NATO targets for Soviet missile and air strikes. It has been established that not only Soviet, but also East German, Polish and probably other Warsaw Pact reydoviki often wear western forms and speak western languages to facilitate these tasks. Suvorov points out that mini-submarines, of the type detected off the Swedish coast, belong to naval Spetsnaz units.

What this article makes clear in addition is that the Spetsnaz are an integral part of the USSR, the Soviet military intelligence service, which operates on foreign territory in peacetime as well as war. Thus, they have their own network of foreign agents now living in the vicinity of their potential targets.

The most chilling and thought-provoking of Suvorov's assertions, however, concerns the specially selected conscripts who make up the bulk of the Spetsnaz units deployed in every Soviet army, front and fleet, but the hard core professionals, who wear civilian clothes. These men and women are killers, whose mission is to track down and assassinate prominent political and military leaders on their home territory, in competition with similar Western "hit squads". If what Suvorov says is true, the western nations invite many of these killers to visit their potential target areas in peacetime, since they are among the best fighters in the USSR.

-Ed

In the Soviet Union, terminology frequently varies according to the context in which the words are being used. For instance, "threat", "assault" and "aggression" are used to denote an enemy's actions, whereas the same actions carried out by Soviet forces are termed "friendly", "warning", "brotherly assistance" and "liberation". In the same way, "counter-espionage", "cypher equipment" and "nuclear weapons", which apply only to the enemy, are referred to in the USSR as "special department", "department eight equipment" and "special weapons". The use of euphemisms extends to many other fields as well, and it would be unthinkable for the Soviet Union to admit to possessing assassination, terrorist and sabotage units. Instead, the Soviet Union has the Spetsnaz, sometimes referred to in the west as diversionary units.

Spetsnaz is the name given to the special forces of Soviet Military Intelligence, the GRU. Although the GRU is the second largest secret service organization

One method used by Spetsnaz troops to gain entry to important areas behind enemy lines is to capture a guard and impersonate him.



Chain of command

The GRU is responsible for reconnaissance (voiskovaya razvedka), secret intelligence (agenturnaya razvedka), Spetsnaz training and operations, production and distribution of information on the enemy, and radio interception of signals. Intelligence groups GRU detachments are known as the 2nd Directorate of the General Staff. Spetsnaz units are employed in army level operations.

The 2nd Department of the staff of every army and tank army consists of five groups, numbered as follows:

- I. Reconnaissance
- II. Intelligence
- III. Spetsnaz
- IV. Information processing
- V. Radio interception

Spetsnaz is thus related to neither reconnaissance nor intelligence. At army formation level, the Spetsnaz group of the 2nd Department has under it an independent Spetsnaz company which may, however, be given information from the Intelligence group's clandestine agents by the 2nd Department commander, in order to direct the company towards its targets.

At the Front level headquarters that are set up in wartime (in peacetime at the HQs of Groups of Forces and Military Districts), these activities are controlled by the 2nd Directorate, which consists of five departments having the same titles and numbering, but which are more powerful in their make-up and influence. The Spetsnaz department of the 2nd Directorate has under its command a Spetsnaz brigade plus a Spetsnaz intelligence centre, which is responsible for recruiting its own clandestine foreign agents.

agents, one run by the intelligence department, the other by the GRU. The GRU, too, has a 2nd Directorate similar to the Front HQ. With the same functions and departments, it has land-based counter-intelligence, a group of intelligence agents, a group of Spetsnaz agents and, in this case, a Spetsnaz naval brigade.

In order to follow the activities of several Front formations in which of various kind and size, up to three or four Spetsnaz detachments (voiskovaya razvedka) are placed under their command. These Spetsnaz detachments are normally commanded directly by the GRU Central Apparatus, the 2nd Chief Directorate of the General Staff.

The 2nd Chief Directorate organizes the coordination of operations by all subordinate levels of Soviet military intelligence and, in addition, has its own very high powered organization of clandestine foreign agents, some of whom are recruited for assassination and terrorist activities.

The role and organization of Spetsnaz forces

In war Spetsnaz units are tasked with:

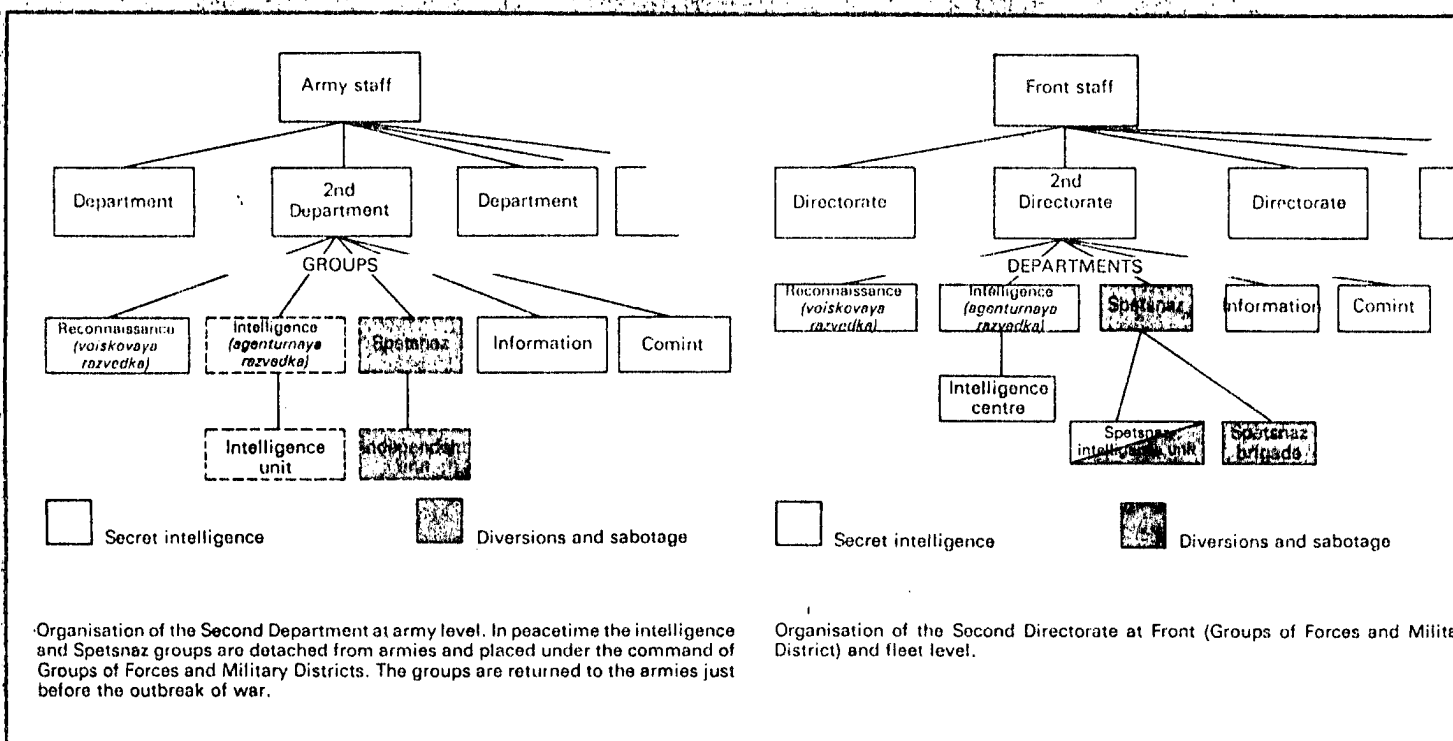
- 1 - Hunting down and assassinating the enemy's political and military leaders. This task is also carried out by the KGB.
- 2 - Seeking out the enemy's nuclear facilities and either designating them as targets for Soviet aircraft and missiles or destroying them by independent action.
- 3 - Neutralising command systems by acting against command centres, staffs and lines of communication.
- 4 - Destroying important targets such as airfields, naval bases and air-defense installations in enemy territory.

power stations, oil and gas storage centres, electricity power lines and transformer stations. Spetsnaz units are not tasked, however, to engage in guerrilla warfare.

The independent Spetsnaz company attached to each army consists of a headquarters element, three parachute platoons, a communications platoon and supporting sub-units. The company has 11 men, including nine officers and 11 warrant officers (praporshchiki). When conducting sabotage operations in the enemy's rear areas the company may operate as a single unit or be divided into smaller groups, although the maximum number of groups is 15. The sub-division of the company during operations is not rigid, however, and the formation can change while an operation is in progress. If necessary each group can operate independently and the communications platoon can set up and maintain communications with a group over a range of 1,000km.

A Spetsnaz brigade comprises a headquarters element, a headquarters company, three or four parachute battalions and supporting units. The strength of a brigade's fighting units is between 1,000 and 1,300 men. As with the independent company, the brigade may operate as a single unit or be sub-divided. In this case the maximum number of groups would be 135. The headquarters company has on full-time, professional soldiers on its strength and is maintained at the highest state of combat readiness. This company's sole task is to seek out and kill the enemy's political and military leaders and it is, thus, the only company that comes into direct contact with the Spetsnaz agents in the field.

A Spetsnaz naval brigade has an HQ element, an HQ company (with the same role and the same unofficial title of "ant VIP" unit as its land-based counterpart),



oup of midget submarines, two or three battalions of combat swimmers, one parachute battalion and supporting units.

Spetsnaz regiments consist of six or seven sabotage companies and have between 700 and 800 men. These regiments differ from the independent companies and brigades in that they are manned solely by professional athletes of the highest calibre, including Olympic athletes.

The GRU Central Apparatus is responsible for the Spetsnaz training battalions, training centres and communications courses. (Particularly important acts of terrorism, in peacetime as well as war, could be carried out by specially trained groups of foreigners — mainly of Asian origin — who are under the direct control of the GRU Central Apparatus).

The Soviet Union's aim is to have the following Spetsnaz units available at the outbreak of war:

1 independent companies, one allocated to each all-arms and tank army. In peacetime the staffs of many of the armies are amalgamated with those of Military Districts and will only be separated from them just before the outbreak of war, but the HQ (anti-VIP) companies of Spetsnaz brigades are permanently deployed as separate entities.

2 Spetsnaz brigades, one per Front formation.

3 Spetsnaz naval brigades, one per fleet.

4 Spetsnaz intelligence units, one with each Front and fleet.

5 Three Spetsnaz regiments which can be allocated to C-in-Cs of the Strategic Directions (three or more Fronts and a fleet). Sabotage agents and detachments controlled centrally by the 2nd Chief Directorate of the General Staff (the GRU Central Apparatus).

It is estimated that, in peacetime, the Spetsnaz strength is between 27,000 and 30,000 troops, a figure that does not

include troops serving in training and support units and officers involved in recruiting and running agents outside the USSR.

The Groups of Forces and Military Districts (which in war would become Fronts) have at their disposal 800-1,000 intelligence agents and 80-110 Spetsnaz agents. The fleets have 160-200 intelligence agents and 20-30 Spetsnaz agents. The total number of agents available to the GRU's Central Apparatus cannot even be estimated, and it is impossible to guess the numerical ratio between intelligence and sabotage agents. Suffice it to say that the GRU Central Apparatus has at its disposal a larger number of agents than all the armies, fleets and Fronts put together.

Spetsnaz cover

Because the Spetsnaz is part of the GRU the ordinary citizen in the Soviet Union knows practically nothing about it. Many precautions are taken to cover up its strength, organization, function, deployment and even the very fact of its existence.

All candidates for the Spetsnaz forces undergo a preliminary loyalty check and, on entry, have to sign the official secrets act. Breaking this is punished as espionage — by death.

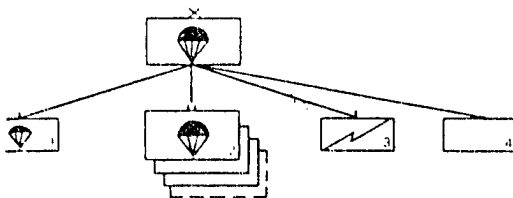
Spetsnaz units for the most part wear the uniform of the airborne forces (VDV) although they have no connection with the latter. Air assault troops also wear the same uniform. Distinguishing between these three types of troops is, thus, very difficult although there is a distinction between airborne troops and the others, which were created after World War 2. During the war, all eight airborne divisions distinguished themselves in battle and were awarded the titles of "Guard" divisions. Thus a soldier wearing the uniform of airborne forces without the guards badge belongs to either the air assault or

Spetsnaz forces. The most noticeable difference between Spetsnaz and airborne forces is that the Spetsnaz are not deployed by parachute and VDV troops use helicopters, whereas Spetsnaz troops use nothing but parachutes and no helicopters. These troops are not trained to jump but can help and act as guides, take photographs and take messages. They are deployed in the same manner as airborne troops are stationed in the rear. Spetsnaz troops wear the uniform of the airborne forces and wear the same insignia as the airborne troops, making identification almost impossible. Spetsnaz midget submarines wear standard submarine uniforms, and all other officers and men in the Spetsnaz naval brigades wear naval infantry uniforms.

No Spetsnaz unit is based independently and they normally share barracks with airborne or air assault troops. Naval Spetsnaz units are co-located with naval infantry units. Where Spetsnaz troops are stationed in proximity to other types of troops then they adopt the latter's uniform. Spetsnaz intelligence units are deployed in areas where there are particularly sensitive targets such as missile and rocket bases, penal battalions and nuclear-weapon storage facilities.

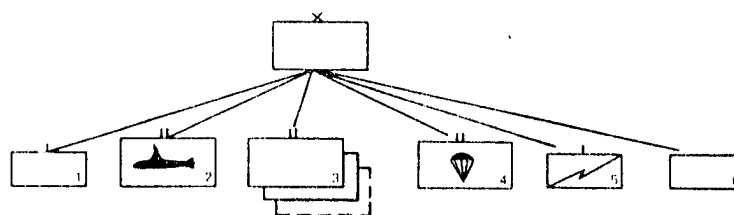
When units share barracks with other forces, all contact between Spetsnaz personnel and those of other units is forbidden and the Spetsnaz unit has its own entrance and well guarded compound.

In the different Military Districts and Groups of Forces, Spetsnaz units have different titles. In the G.O.P. for instance, they are called *reydoviki* (raiders), whereas in the Siberian Military District they are called *okhotniki* (hunters). As a result, when Spetsnaz troops from different areas meet each other by chance they each think that the other belongs to a different organization. The generic term Spetsnaz is only used by the officers when talking amongst themselves.



- HQ company (anti-VIP)
- Parachute battalions
- Signals company
- Supporting units

organisation of a Spetsnaz brigade. In peacetime the independent companies are formed into a battalion of a Spetsnaz brigade. The peacetime establishment is therefore 4-5 battalions and not 3-4 depicted here



- 1 - HQ company (anti-VIP)
- 2 - Midget submarine group
- 3 - Combat swimmer battalions
- 4 - Parachute battalion
- 5 - Signals company
- 6 - Supporting units

Organisation of a Spetsnaz naval brigade.

The Spetsnaz does not have its own schools and academies. Approved For Release 2008/01/11 : CIA-RDP85T00757R000100230038-5
trained at the Reconnaissance Academy, the Kiev Higher Combined-Arms School and at the Special Faculty of the Ryazan Higher Airborne School. While at these schools, Spetsnaz personnel are almost indistinguishable from their fellow students. Higher command personnel and officers involved in secret service work are trained at the 3rd Faculty of the GRU Academy.

In order to limit the circle of those aware of the GRU and the Spetsnaz in peacetime, the independent Spetsnaz companies are detached from their army level commands to become directly subordinate to the staffs of Military Districts and Groups of Forces. The independent companies are grouped to form a battalion in the Spetsnaz brigade found at that level. In the event of war, this battalion is broken up and the independent companies go back under the command of their respective armies.

In order to conceal the existence of the professional nucleus of the Spetsnaz, the brigade anti-VIP HQ companies are detached from their parent brigades to become Military District Group of Forces or fleet athletics teams. The Spetsnaz regiments, which are manned entirely by professionals, are disguised as sporting teams belonging to the Central Army Sporting Club (ZSKA). The same method is used by the KGB, and professional KGB saboteurs belong to the Dinamo Sporting Club. The Soviet Union's combined Olympic team is, for the most part, made up of professionals from these two very wealthy and highly successful clubs.

Manning the fighting units

Most Spetsnaz units are manned by ordinary, but strong, hardy and quick-witted conscript soldiers. The selection procedure begins long before recruits are called up to reception centres at the start of

their military service. Prior to being called up, recruits are selected on the basis of their military service, their physical and intellectual development. Those recruits in the highest category go to the Kremlin Guard, KGB government communications troops, the Spetsnaz and the KGB frontier troops. Thus the Spetsnaz can select the best men and this can be done even to the detriment of other elite forces such as airborne forces (VDV), strategic rocket troops and nuclear submarine units.

Once they arrive in their Spetsnaz units the soldiers undergo a short, but highly intensive, course of military training during which the natural leaders show themselves. These men are then sent on to Spetsnaz training battalions to become sergeants. Each company usually sends more men to the training battalion than it needs sergeants. This is an expensive practice and is unusual in the Soviet Union. The idea is that in the training battalions the competition is so fierce that only the best will be awarded the rank of sergeant. The training battalion course is extremely tough and some of the candidates ultimately return to their units as private soldiers. Even some of those who become sergeants return to their parent companies to be employed as private soldiers. Thus only the very best achieve command. This practice makes it possible to have a permanent reserve of sergeants who can quickly replace any other sergeant who is not maintaining the high standards required. This causes men to strive at all costs to retain their authority and this is only possible through ruthless exploitation of subordinates. More than one third of all Spetsnaz soldiers pass through the train-

ing battalion course. A number of Soviet mid-class submarines have been converted for underwater rescue and can now carry two mini-submarines on the aft deck. These vessels could also be used as mother ships for the Spetsnaz mini-submarine group.

ing battalions, with the result that heavy command echelons to be seriously weakened. The reserve of warrant officers and officers is also very high in Spetsnaz units. Compared to a normal Soviet Army company, a Spetsnaz company has nine officers and 11 warrant officers.

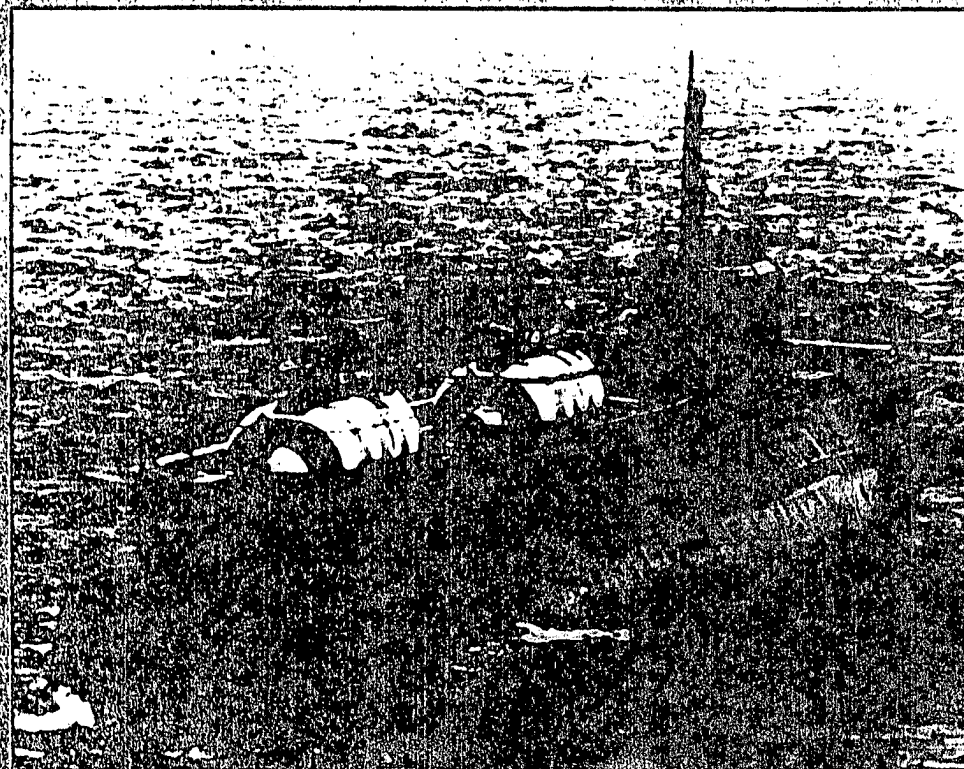
Manning Spetsnaz professional units

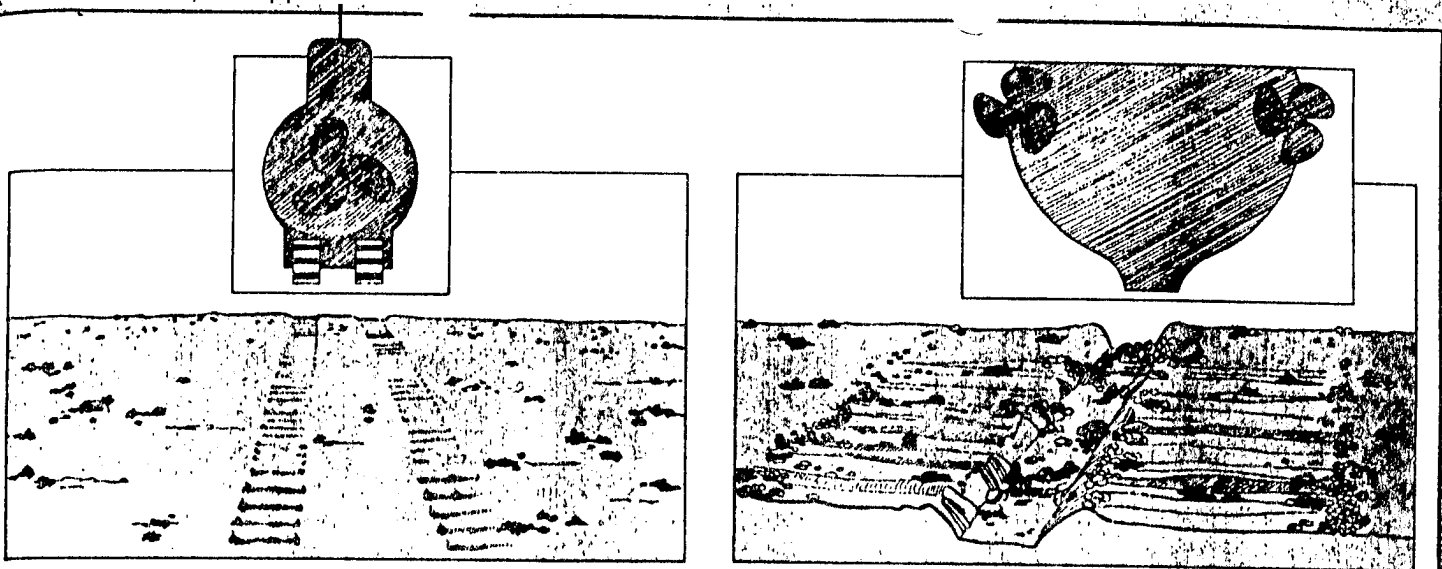
Mention has already been made of the number of athletes in the Spetsnaz. The Soviet Union needs prestige and one way of providing this is by winning Olympic medals. The country needs an organization with draconian discipline to squeeze the maximum effort out of the athletes. At the same time, the Spetsnaz needs athletes of the highest calibre who have the opportunity to visit areas in which they may have to operate in time of war. The athletes, for their part, need opportunities for training and need to belong to an organization that can reward them lavishly for athletic achievement, give them apartments and cars, award commissioned ranks in the forces and can arrange trips outside the Soviet Union. The Spetsnaz thus provides a focal point for the interests of state prestige, military intelligence and individuals who have dedicated themselves to sport.

The ZSKA sports club sends its athletes all over the world and the fact that these athletes have military ranks is not hidden. The KGB, which also has the role of assassinating enemy VIPs, has its own, similar, organization and between the ZSKA (Army) and Dinamo (KGB) there is a bitter and continuous struggle for the best athletes who are "poached" from other sports clubs and societies. It is of note that the number of women athletes in the Spetsnaz is unusually high.

There is very little published documentary evidence of the activities of these professional brigades of assassins. However there is one old, but convincing, example from the Great Patriotic War (World War 2), prior to the Spetsnaz itself being set up. During the war, the NKVD (now the KGB) had the OMSBON NKVD USSR, or NKVD independent special service motor-rifle brigade. This brigade, trained and launched behind the enemy lines 212 detachments and groups totalling 7,316 men. Their basic task was the physical elimination of enemy political and military leaders. In addition, the brigade wiped out known and potential enemies in the territories "liberated" by the Red Army. According to official figures, quoted in "Home Forces in the Great Patriotic War" (Moscow, Yurizdat 1975, Document No. 278) this one brigade alone annihilated 140,000 people.

The brigade was made up of NKVD and state security workers, units of frontier and home troops, distinguished athletes, including many famous top-flight names, and anti-fascists of various national groups recommended by the Comintern" (ibid). In this sentence we find all the components which also exist in the Spetsnaz, i.e. ordinary, but carefully selected and trained soldiers, top-grade athletes, foreigners, and at the head of all of these, the professional intelligence men.





According to the official Swedish report on Soviet submarine intrusions into Swedish territorial waters, six Soviet submarines were operating in the Stockholm archipelago in October 1982. Of these, two were mini-submarines. Marks on the seabed indicated that one of these had tracks and a single propeller and that the other

had a reinforced keel and twin propellers. There were also indications of a rendezvous between the tracked mini-submarine and a mother ship. These drawings depict the track marks and traces of the two submersibles and artist's impressions of what the two vehicles may look like.

Spetsnaz agents

In the USSR, the word "agent" only refers to a foreigner recruited by the Soviet Union's intelligence services. Intelligence agents run by armies, fleets and Fronts Military Districts and Groups of Forces are quite unlike those recruited by the GRU Central Apparatus, who are more like the spies depicted in thriller novels. Spetsnaz intelligence agents carry out more prosaic tasks. The recruitment of foreign agents is often undertaken from within the Soviet Union or from friendly countries (including inland). There are no restrictions as to who can be recruited, but the most valued are those who are not involved with classified matters and those who are of mature age. Any agent recruited while visiting the Soviet Union returns to his or her own country and recruits several assistants. In no case do the clandestine intelligence agents of armies and Fronts attempt to penetrate into restricted areas. Instead, using GRU-supplied money, they buy houses close to important targets (airfields, bridges, missile emplacements, naval bases, etc). The information they provide is often fragmentary and laconic. But, in the case of important targets, it is verified by other agents who are quite separately covering the same target. The intelligence they provide will be used by the Spetsnaz sabotage units to deliver sudden and accurate strikes.

Spetsnaz sabotage agents, on the other hand, are less involved in the collection of intelligence and generally find jobs or live close to transport and power installations. Their task, when ordered by the GRU, is to lay explosive charges and put the installations out of action. Often, such an agent may do nothing else that is criminal during his or her whole life while awaiting this order. Another important task for Spetsnaz sabotage agents in peacetime

of houses and plots of land where sabotage groups can find refuge in time of war. These houses and plots are usually in the country, not far from the sea or from a forest, or in the mountains. They will usually have an ordinary nuclear shelter which is stocked with food, water, etc. In addition, the Spetsnaz sabotage agents may provide sabotage groups with motor transport, fuel and supplies and guide them to their objectives.

Both intelligence and sabotage agents come under the command of senior Front intelligence officers and can be transferred from one category to the other at any time, or, indeed, ordered to fulfil both roles.

In principle, Spetsnaz agents in peacetime have little or no contact with Soviet citizens outside the Soviet Union, thus adding to their stability as members of the community in which they are living. They actually form "sleeping" agent networks, which would be brought into action only in the event of war. In the meantime, the Spetsnaz has reliable means of checking on them, so that it can be reasonably certain that the foreign recruits will either carry out their allotted tasks when called upon, or at least will try to do so.

Combat training

In peacetime, the three elements of the Spetsnaz - combat units, units of professional athletes and foreign agents - do not have the opportunity to meet each other and often do not suspect each other's existence. This is due both to the efforts made to maintain secrecy and also to differences in their combat roles.

The training of secret agents takes place, on an individual basis, in special training centres which are mainly on foreign territory. One such centre is located in Dusseldorf. The main subjects of the training

demolition (theory and practice) and collaboration with professional groups.

The training of professional athletes is done in small groups and sections. Their main training subjects are physical training (in some cases to Olympic level), foreign languages, the study of the territories likely to be fought in (in the course of sports trips abroad), communications and demolition.

The training of combat units is in many ways similar to that of VDV troops. The strain of this training is witnessed by the fact that for Spetsnaz officers and warrant officers each year of service is reckoned as 18 months, i.e. 10 years of Spetsnaz service as an officer is equivalent to 15 years of normal service. Similarly, Spetsnaz officers and warrant officers receive 50% more pay as well as an additional payment for each parachute jump. Spetsnaz soldiers have the same or even greater workload but they serve for two years like all other conscripts.

In the course of combat training, Spetsnaz units usually operate against air, missile units and armoured forces. On average, these units spend half their time in barracks and when they leave in small groups, the climate and the lack of sleeping bags in the Soviet Army one gets some idea of the conditions of service.

Combat training is carried out on a competitive basis. In competitive training, continuous at all times. A competition is to drop groups in totally uninhabited regions hundreds of miles from a rendezvous. The test is one of high speed movement, without supplies and without means of transport. MVD (Ministry of Interior) troops are usually called in to search for and try to capture the sabotage groups.

Once a year the best Spetsnaz units from all over the Soviet Union assemble together at the main training centre in the region

...an intensive period of training and competition. Cc Approved For Release 2008/01/11 : CIA-RDP85T00757R000100230038-5
Spetsnaz training centers subject the Zheltaye Vody group of uranium mines and concentration camps. (Similar concentration camps exist in Kyshtym, Achinsk, Severodvinsk and Chelyabinsk. Zheltaye Vody is one of the most frightful of them.) It is possible that the Spetsnaz training center has no connection at all with the concentration camp. All the same, there is something symbolic in their juxtaposition.

Spetsnaz combat training is made to resemble actual battle conditions as closely as possible. The role of the enemy in exercises is played by the home forces of the MVD, by KGB government communications troops, local KGB units and the police (*militsiya*). The main task of all these forces is the security of particularly important targets, and combatting subversive activities. For this reason the leaderships of the GRU, KGB and MVD are equally interested in carrying out combined exercises and in the painstaking study and analysis of the experience accumulated. The Spetsnaz is often brought in to carry out mock attacks on government and military objectives, thus practising their own tactics and at the same time raising the combat readiness of elements of the home security forces to repel possible raids.

For example, during exercises of the 5th Army in the Far Eastern Military District, use was made of the district's Spetsnaz brigade (whose HQ is in Ussuriysk) to attack HQs and missile units. On the whole, the brigade's operations were successful, but during an attack on a nuclear weapon store the Spetsnaz groups fell into a trap. The store commanders arranged their vehicles in such a way that, when the alarm was sounded, all the vehicles switched on their headlamps at the same



► *Roydoviki* special forces mount an ambush such as might take place deep in NATO territory (the Northern Flank or the Central Region). Troops in photo are possibly East Germans.

► One of the weapons that may be carried by Spetsnaz sabotage groups is the *Strela 2* SAM (NATO code name *Grail*). The missile first entered service in 1966 and was subsequently updated in the mid-1970s. The improvements meant an increase in range (from 3.5km to 5.6km), in altitude (5,000ft to 14,000ft) and in lethality.

time, thus forming a blazing field of light around the field store and blinding the saboteurs. Dogs were then let loose. The majority of Soviet HQs, signal units and missile units now form a circle at night and set up a system of signals between all vehicles so that, on command, the surrounding area can be lit up.

During combat training, KGB and MVD units and also Soviet Army HQs make use of a range of countermeasures against saboteurs, from a system of total control of radio traffic to the use of helicopters and aircraft. Experience has also shown that dogs are still the simplest and most effective way of combatting saboteurs. This opinion is held both by the KGB and the Spetsnaz.

In the course of training, in addition to operations against real Soviet military objectives, Spetsnaz units are also trained in centres where likely theatres of action are realistically reproduced in great detail. In the Carpathians, in the region of Yavrov, the terrain is reminiscent of the French Alps and the Baltic coast is like northern Germany. Inflatable models of *Lance*, *Pluton* and *Pershing* missiles, howitzers, *Magnum* IV aircraft, *Jaguars*, etc., are used. It is considered much more important to recreate, not the uniform of the enemy, but his tactics and the methods of interrogation to which saboteurs will be subjected should they be caught. In this connection the lessons given to Spetsnaz soldiers are very instructive and long remembered.

Soviet Tactics for Operations in the Enemy Rear by C.N. Donnelly

This text is taken from an article entitled "Operations in the Enemy Rear - Soviet doctrine and tactics" published in IDR 1/1980.

During a period of international tension which is almost certain to be the precursor of any war, the USSR will, by political pressure, persuasion or threat, attempt to undermine the will of the potential enemy. All possible means of subversion will be employed to cause dissatisfaction and discontent so as to divorce the sympathy of the population from the authorities, and by covert means upset the stability and smooth functioning of the society. To paint a picture of disruption and subversion is not to be a scare-monger, but to emphasize that this is the type of situation which the Soviets would like to achieve, because it will increase their chances of a quick victory. If, as is quite possible, they clearly fail to disrupt the fabric of the enemy society by their subversion, it will be a considerable deterrent to them, in their eyes weighing heavily against their likelihood of rapid success.

Deployment of strategic diversionary groups

The first airborne or seaborne assaults would be deployed at the most only hours before the launching of the full-scale offensive, so as not to alert the defenders. At the outset of the Manchurian Operation (August 16-27, 1945), the theatre commander deployed against strategic targets some 20 airborne assaults of 35-40 men each. Drawn, it would appear, from a special unit of about 600 men. The groups were dropped close to central Manchurian cities (including Harbin, Mukden, Chanchun and Port Astur), on the Lyodun peninsula and in North Korea with the task of causing as much disruption as possible by sabotage and raids against strategic points and military and industrial targets. At the same time, fast MTBs were used to drop small teams of men, in boats and as combat swimmers, in all the North Korean ports to disrupt the port operations by, once again, sabotage and diversion.

The teams used were small, and their employment was not on a large scale. There is no evidence that they were able to create a significant level of destruction deep in the enemy rear. What they did do was to create panic, particularly among the Japanese military authorities in

central Manchuria, which greatly increased the shock effect of the Soviets' massive surprise attack.

We consider that it is a valid historical lesson for the initial employment of diversionary troops in any future war. The actual damage that a team of men could accomplish might, with or without their side, be moderate but would produce only a slight shock. However, the shock to the morale of an attack made on, say, the minis defense in Bonn, the Hague or London, or the assassination in their own homes of some politicians, industrialists, financiers, etc., in the very first hours of the war would be disproportionately great in comparison to the small effort attempted such an operation.

In addition to "shock" political targets, targets of such teams would include communications centres, both civilian and military; command posts of the armed forces; radar sites; and of course, as a priority, any nuclear weapon system accessible at such an early stage of the campaign.

The Soviet conviction of the value of developing this type of group stems not only from their own successful use of such forces against the Germans and the Japanese during the

The Soviet Union's involvement in Afghanistan has given the Spetsnaz new opportunities for training in actual combat situations and commanders are making use of these opportunities.

Weapons

In combat every Spetsnaz soldier has a wide range of weapons: a Kalashnikov automatic rifle, 300 rounds of ammunition, a P6 silenced pistol, a knife, six hand grenades or a light grenade launcher, and medical packs. Each group of saboteurs has an R-350M radio set with reception and burst transmission facilities. Depending on the actual assignment, the group may have SA-7 Strela 2 (NATO codename *Grail*) surface-to-air missiles, directional mines and explosives.

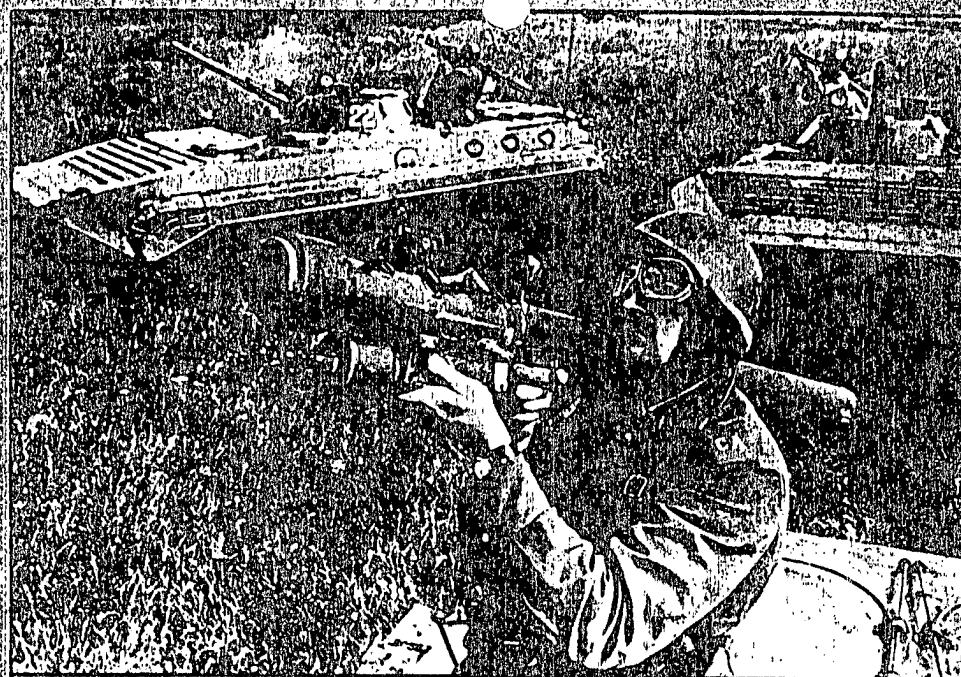
The Spetsnaz has no heavy weapons but, when operating in the enemy's rear, saboteurs may seize enemy tanks, APCs or other vehicles. While doing this, they may even wear enemy uniform.

In a series of experimental exercises Spetsnaz units have used light motor cycles and specially constructed, small cross-country vehicles. It is difficult to say, however, whether these will become standard equipment.

Tactics

It is considered that Spetsnaz operations can only be successful if they take place simultaneously and on a massive scale, and if airborne troops, naval infantry, air assault brigades, divisional deep reconnaissance units, KGB teams and similar groups from the Warsaw Pact allies are also operating in the enemy's rear areas.

A massive drop of Spetsnaz units in the early part of a war may be preceded by groups of professionals penetrating into enemy territory. They may, for example,



enter a country in the guise of groups of tourists, delegations, sports teams, or as crews and passengers on merchant ships, civil aircraft or commercial trucks. Furthermore, before the outbreak of war, a certain number of Spetsnaz officers and warrant officers may be posted to Soviet embassies and consulates in the guise of technical personnel, guards, gardeners, drivers, etc. On the eve of war there may be a concentration of Spetsnaz units (on various pretexts and under various covers) in neutral states followed by subsequent infiltration into enemy territory once fighting has begun.

The infiltration of Spetsnaz personnel into enemy territory before the outbreak of hostilities is a very risky, but necessary, operation, especially if nuclear weapons are not being used.

The main Spetsnaz forces will be dropped simultaneously on all fighting fronts. Army independent companies will be dropped 100-500km in the enemy's rear and Front brigades 500-1,000km. The professional, athletic regiments will operate within range of capital cities, regardless of how far these are from the front line. Spetsnaz naval brigades will concentrate their efforts against naval bases, the priority being submarine bases.

The absence of heavy weapons and equipment makes it possible to use ordinary Aeroflot aircraft to deploy the Spetsnaz and this in turn makes it possible to concentrate all the efforts of military transport aircraft on backing up operations by airborne forces.

On landing, the Spetsnaz units bury their parachutes before leaving the drop zone. Their most dangerous adversary at this moment is considered to be the helicopter. After leaving the DZ, several groups amalgamate and organise a defended base in a safer area where all the heavier equipment is left. The area of the base will be mined and trip flares set. The groups then set about their tasks, ranging over several tens of kilometres from the base, leaving several men to watch it from a distance. The position of the base may be

covered, the guards will be alerted by the trip flares and exploding mines and will make their way to a rendezvous point to warn the returning groups of the danger. Equipment will be moved each night from one hiding place to another. If enemy transport is captured, no base will be set up.

The most complicated task of Spetsnaz units is thought to be the search for targets of special importance. Those targets whose location is accurately known in advance will be destroyed by missiles or aircraft. The Spetsnaz units have to deal with those targets whose location is only roughly known. In the search for targets the units will use electronic equipment, or the groups will deploy to the limit of visual contact (sometimes as much as a kilometre between individual soldiers) before conducting a sweep on foot.

During such a sweep, the Spetsnaz move slowly and make use of camouflage. Should they meet the enemy they will not usually engage in combat. They will disperse and meet again at prearranged spots. Once the target is found, communication is established with the army or Front HQ and the coordinates of the target are passed on for attack by missiles or aircraft. Then the groups leave the area rapidly in order not to be caught in the attack.

There are, however, some situations in which Spetsnaz will destroy targets independently. This is usually in cases when it is impossible to establish communications with the command base when their express mission is the elimination of a target or personality or the seizure of documents or when an enemy missile is ready for firing. In the latter case an attack will be made in the face of any odds, even if the group commander is certain that his whole group will perish without doing any damage. It is believed that a sudden attack (even if unsuccessful) may cause the enemy to cancel the launch or postpone it in order to recheck all systems and equipment. Having spotted a missile being readied on the launcher, the saboteage

but also from their painful experience of German diversionary teams behind their lines, particularly in 1944-45. Although these teams are small in number, they created such communications, supply and morale problems in the Soviet rear that initially one and later two entire KVD regiments had to be allotted to guard the rear of each Soviet field army.

During the last war, the Soviet diversionary troops made extensive use of the partisans in their area of operation. As a rule, they never divulged their plans or missions to partisans for fear of treachery, but they used partisans who knew the area as guides to help them reach their targets more safely, and they co-ordinated their sabotage missions with those of the partisans. It is to be expected that in a future war Soviet and West German agents in West Germany would be employed in this partisan role as guides or sources of local information.

Diversionary troops in the first wave of the offensive will have to have a very high standard of training indeed, as well as a high degree of political reliability. It is quite probable that many of them will speak NATO languages, and they will have NATO uniforms available to them for deception purposes.

all from a distance, using fire from sniper rifles or grenade launchers. Sometimes a small group will open heavy fire from one direction, thereby attracting attention to itself, while other groups approach the target silently.

More than once during training, instances have been recorded of Spetsnaz units attacking important targets in stolen cars, armoured vehicles and even tanks. It is difficult to say how the saboteurs will behave in a real situation, but the experience of World War 2 showed that the spirit needed for suicide missions is constant and infectious. Since then, it is true, quite a lot has changed.

Professional soldiers in Spetsnaz units, unlike ordinary Spetsnaz soldiers, wear civilian clothes. Moreover, they can make contact with Spetsnaz agents and obtain any necessary information, transport or shelter. Professional Spetsnaz units will operate in towns, especially in capital cities, and also in areas where enemy command centres are likely to be located. The search for government and military leaders may be carried out in various ways. In this task the need for accurate intelligence from agents is regarded as one of the most important elements of success.

Command and control

Spetsnaz units are conspicuous by their considerable independence of action. The commander of a sabotage unit usually has very great power behind the enemy lines. A Spetsnaz unit is dropped into an area where there are likely to be particularly important targets and from then on operates independently. Army Front (and even higher) HQs interfere in the operations of saboteurs only in the case of discovery of more important targets or when it is expedient to bring the saboteurs out of a given area (e.g. before launching a nuclear strike).

Higher formation HQs try not to interfere with the operations of sabotage units, in the belief that the commander behind the enemy lines can see the situation more clearly. Coordination between Spetsnaz

units subordinate to different HQs is organized merely by the allocation of boundaries and in the timing of strikes.

In war other Soviet units besides those of the Spetsnaz will be operating in enemy territory. Among these are:

Deep reconnaissance companies from reconnaissance battalions of motor-rifle and tank divisions. These companies hardly differ from the Spetsnaz in their role and tactics. The only difference is that these companies are transported behind the enemy lines in helicopters, jeeps and light armoured vehicles and not dropped by parachute. Deep reconnaissance companies have far fewer men than Spetsnaz companies. They may deploy only five, not 15, sabotage groups each. There are, however, considerably more companies. Deep reconnaissance units do not usually work with the Spetsnaz, and the range limitation on deep reconnaissance operations to a maximum of 100km behind enemy lines allows Spetsnaz units to concentrate their activities further in the enemy's rear, without being distracted by operations close behind them.

Front air assault brigades operate independently, but sometimes Spetsnaz units may guide their combat helicopters to their targets. Occasionally combined operations between helicopter air assault forces and saboteurs are possible, as is the use of air assault brigade helicopters for the evacuation of prisoners and Spetsnaz wounded.



Airborne divisions operate in accordance with the High Command's plans. In the event of supply difficulties they switch purely guerrilla tactics. It is not usual for combined operations to be organised between airborne divisions and Spetsnaz units, although the operations of powerful airborne groups behind the enemy's lines create a situation favourable to the operation of Spetsnaz detachments.

There are two situations in which superior HQ will organise direct cooperation between units operating in the enemy's rear:

- 1—When a combined attack is the only way to destroy or capture the target.
- 2—When Soviet units in the enemy's rear have incurred very heavy losses and the Soviet command forms improvised groups from the remnants of various units.

The Soviet command is fully aware that Spetsnaz operations will involve enormous sacrifices. Experience in training shows that losses may be enormous during an airborne assault. At the same time the Soviet command remembers the consequence of two partisan operations carried out during large-scale offensives by the Red Army during World War 2. *Operation Railway War* began on August 3, 1943, the height of the battle for Kursk, when Soviet forces went over to the offensive. About 100,000 partisans took part, destroying 836 special trains and blowing up 57 road bridges and 184 railway bridges. The enemy's rear area was paralysed over large areas. In one operation 215,000 lengths of railway track were blown up. (*Soviet Military Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 7, p.106).

On an even greater scale was *Operation Concerto*, in which 120,000 partisans took part. *Concerto* was mounted while the Red Army was attacking and forcing the crossing of the river Dnieper. In the considered opinion of Marshal of the Soviet Union, Yeremenko, "without *Concerto* the forcing of the Dnieper would have been impossible."

Of course, the partisans were on their own territory while Spetsnaz troops have to operate on foreign territory — a not in forests and swamps but in populated areas. Somehow, too, they have to get these areas.

All the same, in Soviet HQs, the idea is very popular: "Supposing we repeat *Concerto*, not against bridges and roads but rather against NATO's nuclear weapons and command control systems?"

